

**Bill contains Cheyney University project sponsored by Congressman Sestak to support workforce development in his District**

October 7, 2009

Washington, DC – Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) voted to pass the Conference Report of the Fiscal Year 2010 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. The bill included a \$300,000 project sponsored by the Congressman to support Cheyney University's Aquaculture Research and Education Center. The Center located on the campus of the oldest Historically Black University fosters growth of commercial aquaculture in Pennsylvania and the mid-Atlantic Region through its research, education, and extension projects. It also contains \$350 million in much need aid to our Nation's farmers. The bill now awaits Senate approval and the President's signature.

"Passage of this important bill and support for the Cheyney Aquaculture Center will help develop and support new economic avenues for our region—helping to attract and retain young people in Pennsylvania," said Congressman Sestak. "At Cheyney I have worked hard to facilitate collaborative projects between the university and community and business leaders. I particularly applaud the work of President Howard-Vital and her administration to improve the school's financial management and strategic planning so that the school will be qualified for increased support from the state of Pennsylvania, benefactors and alumni. As the oldest Historically Black University in the country, Cheyney University is a treasured resource."

In addition, this legislation allocates necessary resources for economic development in rural

areas as well as programs that help families most affected by the struggling economy afford nutritious meals. In all, the bill provides \$121.1 billion—\$264 million more than Fiscal Year 2009 funding (12 percent more if emergency stimulus funds are not taken into account) and funds the Department of Agriculture; the Food and Drug Administration (FDA); the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC); and the Farm Credit Administration. Approximately 80 percent of the resources are assigned to mandatory spending programs, which include food stamps – for which there has been a sharp increase in demand due to rising unemployment and falling household income; school lunch and other child nutrition programs, which receive 12 percent more than the current funding level; the Women, Infants, and Children program, which receives ten percent more than the current funding level; the Food & Drug Administration, which receives 14 percent more than the current level; rural development programs, which receive four percent more than the current level; and Agriculture Department conservation programs, which receive one percent more than the current level.

As a member of the Dairy Caucus, Congressman Sestak was especially supportive of measures added to the bill to provide much needed relief to this country's dairy farmer, which are facing one of the worse economic crises in over a decade. Of the \$350 million assistance provided in bill, \$250 million is for direct payments and another \$60 million for the federal government to purchase cheese and other dairy products to help reduce surplus.

“We must ensure that during these difficult economic times we offer the necessary support for Americans most affected, and programs that must thrive in our economic recovery, which certainly include agricultural initiatives,” said Congressman Sestak. “To meet these objectives, this bill increases funding for both nutritional assistance as well as infrastructure in rural areas, while significantly cutting spending where it is not necessary.”

More specifically, the bill includes the following provisions:

***Details of 2010 Agriculture and FDA Appropriations Bills***

□

**Nutrition Programs:** \$82.782 billion, including mandatory funding, for domestic nutrition assistance, including:

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):** \$58.278 billion, \$4.309 billion above 2009, in mandatory budget authority, to provide food assistance to over 36 million low-income people. Funding is included to increase elderly participation as it has been estimated that only 30 percent of eligible seniors participate in SNAP.
- **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC):** \$7.252 billion, \$398 million above the 2009 non-emergency enacted level. The bill provides funding to help up to 9.6 million women, infants, and children with benefits that promote a healthy pregnancy for mothers and a healthy start for their children. It also provides \$162 million for a number of program improvements such as: increasing fruit and vegetable vouchers, supporting management information systems, implementing the electronic benefit transfer system, and expanding breast feeding peer counseling program.
- **Commodity Supplemental Food Program:** \$171 million, \$9 million above the request and \$11 million above 2009, to provide nutritious food to more than half a million low-income women, infants, children, and elderly citizens struggling with rising food costs. To ensure more families receive the support they need during this period of economic stress, the bill also provides funding to expand this critical assistance in 32 current states and in 7 new states with USDA-approved feeding plans: Arkansas, Oklahoma, Delaware, Utah, New Jersey, Georgia, and Maine.
- **Child Nutrition programs:** \$16.9 billion, \$1.9 billion above 2009, in mandatory budget authority, to provide nutritious meals and snacks to over 32 million children in schools, child care institutions, adult day care centers, and after school care programs.

□

**Food and Drug Safety:** \$4.268 billion for the two primary federal agencies responsible for regulating safety for our food and drug supply:

- **Food and Drug Administration (FDA):** \$2.36 billion, \$7 million above the request and \$306 million above 2009, to help FDA improve the safety of domestic and imported food and medical products. An additional \$893 million will be collected in user fees.
- **Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS):** \$1.02 billion, matching the request and \$47 million above 2009, to help ensure the safety of the U.S. meat and poultry supply.

□

**International Food Aid:** \$1.89 billion, \$564 million above 2009, not including supplemental appropriations bills, to help meet humanitarian food needs in countries stricken with natural disasters and political strife, including:

**P.L. 480 Food for Peace Title II Grants:** \$1.69 billion, matching the request and \$464 million above 2009, not including emergency supplemental funding.

**McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program:** \$209.5 million, \$10 million above the request and \$109.5 million above 2009, to support education, child development, and food security for some of the world's poorest children.

**Agricultural Research:** \$2.767 billion, \$174 million above 2009, for USDA research agencies, including the:

- **Agricultural Research Service:** \$1.25 billion, \$97 million above the request and \$63

million above 2009.

- **National Institute of Food and Agriculture:** \$1.343 billion, \$176 million above the request and \$121 million above 2009, including an increase of nearly \$61 million for competitive agricultural research grants.

□

**Rural Development:** \$2.979 billion, \$246 million above 2009 and \$37 million below the request, for USDA programs important to rural communities including rural housing, water projects, community facilities and economic development efforts. These programs not only sustain our rural communities, but also create new opportunities for growth and development in the nation's small town economies.

- **Rural Rental Assistance:** \$980 million, \$78 million above 2009, to allow for the renewal of expiring rental contracts that otherwise would result in the eviction of tenants, comprised mostly of elderly, disabled, or female head of household.

- **Single Family Housing Loans:** \$214 million in budget authority to support more than \$13 billion in direct and guaranteed single family housing loans. Not counting funds available in the Recovery Act, this is an increase of nearly \$6 billion above 2009 and is necessary to meet growing demand. In the aftermath of the national housing crisis, the USDA rural housing programs remain extremely active in support of home ownership.

**Agricultural Credit Insurance Fund:** \$140.6 million in budget authority to support more than \$5 billion in farm operating, ownership, and conservation loans. This provides \$257 million more in farm ownership loans and \$676 million more in farm operating loans than the President's request.

**Animal and Plant Health:** \$909.67 million, \$32.5 million above the request and \$28.3 million

above 2009, to fund programs that protect American agriculture against animal and plant diseases.

**Conservation Programs:** \$1 billion, \$101 million above the request and \$40 million above 2009, for the Natural Resources Conservation Service to improve service in the field, deliver conservation to protect the environment, and upgrade aging dams at risk of catastrophic failure. The bill restores cuts to valuable conservation programs, including the Resource Conservation and Development Program and the watershed and Flood Prevention Operations Program. Importantly, the bill rejects \$267 million in cuts to priority farm bill conservation programs, including the Wetlands Reserve Program, Farmland Protection Program, and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program.

**Commodity Futures Trading Commission:** \$168.8 million, \$8.2 million above the request and \$22.8 million above 2009, to enhance oversight of the commodity futures markets. The increased resources will provide for additional staff and improved technology to better secure the markets from improper speculation.

### OTHER IMPORTANT POLICY ITEMS

**Dairy Assistance:** \$350 million to provide assistance to the nation's dairy farmers who are struggling due to historically low prices, including \$290 million to assist struggling dairy producers and \$60 million to allow for the purchase of cheese and other dairy products for food banks.

**International Food Assistance:** Includes \$13 million to assist in the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan. In addition, funds are provided for research to develop new food aid products to provide higher nutritional content to food aid recipients. Further, guidance is provided to the Secretary to improve audit systems for maintaining the quality of food aid commodities and to generally improve the efficiencies of administering food aid programs.

**Imported Poultry Products from China:** Includes bill language to ensure the protection of public health with respect to any poultry products exported from China to the U.S. by audits and on-site reviews of facilities before any Chinese facilities are certified as eligible to ship poultry products to the U.S. and implementing a significantly increased level of port-of-entry re-inspections to ensure sanitary conditions.

**Country of Origin Labeling (COOL):** Fully funds the costs to continue overseeing country of origin labeling for fresh fruits and vegetables, meats and other products.

**Inspection Pilot Program:** Prohibits FSIS from implementing a risk-based inspection pilot program until

FSIS implements changes recommended by the USDA Inspector General.